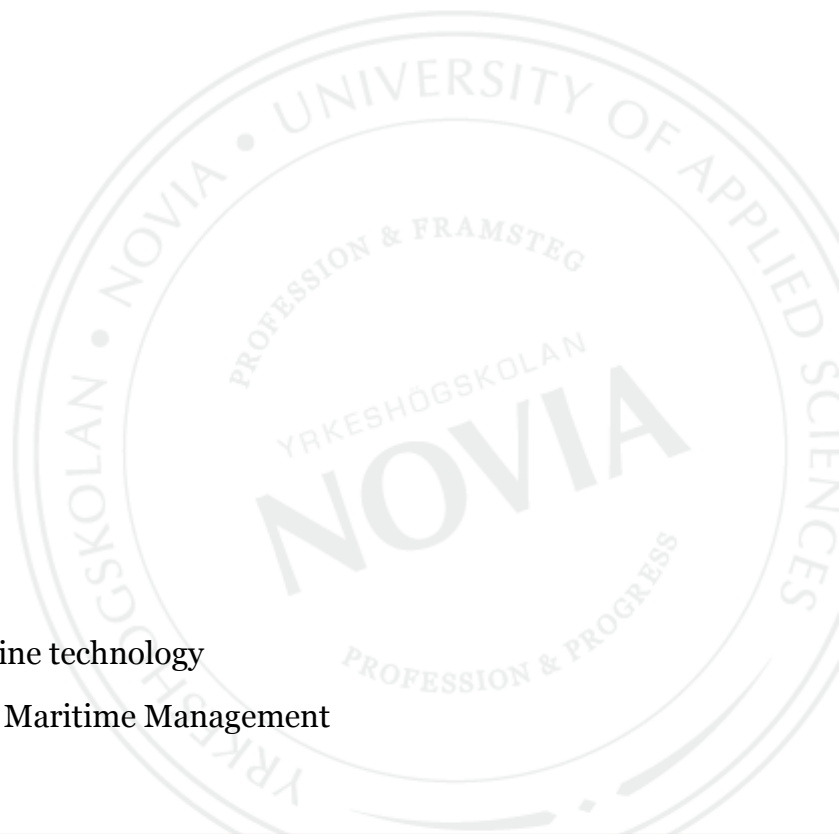


# **The impact of females in a male dominant working environment**

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## Summary

This thesis is a study of the opinions and prejudices involving around the women at sea. The thesis is based on the history behind the women at sea which is used to explain the existing opinions and prejudices about women who work at sea. The maritime industry has and still is a very masculine field that has not too many women in it.

The opinions of women as coworkers are based on the questionnaire made for student at UAS Novia studying Maritime Management. This thesis involves history from the early stages of women taking part of the maritime industry, the current situation and the atmosphere for women working at sea. The opinions are based on the group that the questionnaire was studied with.

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Language: English Key words: Women at sea, Working atmosphere, Seafaring.

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## Table of contents

1	Introduction .....	3
1.1	Purpose .....	3
1.2	Formulation of the research problem .....	4
1.3	Limitation .....	4
2	Finnish women in working life .....	4
2.1	The construction of livelihood .....	5
2.2	The independency of the working woman .....	5
3	Female on a male dominant working environment.....	6
3.1	A woman on a male dominant profession .....	8
3.2	The resistance to change .....	9
4	Beliefs and superstitions of women's at sea .....	10
4.1	A woman on board is bad luck .....	10
4.2	The ship is referred as she .....	10
4.3	Mermaids eating sailors.....	11
4.4	Protection from female figures .....	11
5	Women in seafaring in Finland .....	12
5.1	Increase of women in seafaring.....	12
5.2	Limiting the use of female workforce.....	13
5.3	1928 Seamen's law .....	13
5.4	Women and the Finnish Union for Seafarers .....	14
5.5	Repealing the Seamen's law.....	15
5.6	Adapting women to the sea industry.....	16
6	Women at sea nowadays .....	17
6.1	Statistics of the sex distribution on Finnish vessels .....	17
6.2	Differences between compartments.....	18
7	Research methods.....	19
7.1	The questionnaire .....	19
7.2	Target group.....	20
8	The research answers.....	20
8.1	The amount of answers and the validation of the answer .....	20
8.2	Analysing the answers.....	21
8.2.1	Background information.....	21
8.2.2	The general questions.....	24
8.2.3	Questions for men .....	27
8.2.4	Questions for women .....	28

8.2.5	Women in the Finnish sea industry .....	30
8.2.6	Non-valid answer.....	30
9	Analysing the study .....	31
9.1	Conclusions of the study.....	31
9.2	Critical examination .....	33
9.3	Further studies .....	34
10	Works Cited.....	36
	Appendices 1 - Questionnaire .....	38

# **1 Introduction**

A woman working at sea is not a completely new thing in Finland, since the sailing ships, women have been working on board. Some of them have been dressing themselves as men to be able to work onboard, some women have been in the vacancies which were seen as more suitable for women. The acceptance has not always been very positive towards women working on ships, but as all attitudes, this is also something that will change over time.

The amount of women in the maritime industry is growing all the time.

To understand and internalize what has had an impact to the current state, it is important to be familiar with the history. The change in the construction of livelihood in Finland, especially industrialization, opened a window for the working women to step out. The development in the sea industry (the increase of passenger steam ships) had a great impact in the increase of workforce needed on board and also to the increase of women at sea.

The main goal of this thesis is to show how maritime industry has changed due the time and how women have been accepted to the work community. The study also wants to take note of how women themselves find the atmosphere at their workplaces as they go on board.

## **1.1 Purpose**

The intention of this thesis is to study the impact of the female seafarers on board a male dominant work environment.

Since the maritime industry is a male dominant field I wanted to study how people, who have been working for a longer time, find the fact that more and more females are coming to the industry. Does it differ from the ones who have been working less at sea?

This thesis also studies how the female seafarers find the male dominant work environment. With the background knowledge of other industries this study will be concerning the shipping industry, which is by its nature a very different industry compared to other industries. I've been told that the attitudes among sailors are

lagging behind ten years. With this thesis I want to see whether this statement could really be true or just an exaggeration.

## **1.2 Formulation of the research problem**

The formulation of the research problem is based on the idea of the working atmosphere on board.

- How males find it to have female co-workers?
- Does a female co-worker actually have an impact on the working atmosphere?
- How do women find it when they go onboard a male dominant working environment, in this case a vessel?
- How do the female seamen find the acceptance is when they go onboard?

## **1.3 Limitation**

This thesis will first tell the background of female workers at sea. The questionnaire will focus on the female seafarers working at cargo vessels, by this limiting the passenger vessels. The female seafarers' onboard cargo vessels are doing more of the work that was and is considered as masculine work. The passenger vessels have a longer history with female workers, especially on the feminine vacancies. I wanted to focus on the impact of females on a male dominant working environment and due to this reason, will focus more on the cargo vessels.

## **2 Finnish women in working life**

A woman in working life is not a new thing in Finland. Women have been working in the agriculture for centuries, running the farms and beside that also the home. Even before it was legalized to practice a profession of one's own, women were working in the family businesses beside men, becoming experts in their own fields. After the husbands or fathers running the businesses, the women were even able to inherit the business and lead it by themselves. (Hentilä, 2006)

## **2.1 The construction of livelihood**

Finland has strong roots in agriculture and forestry, due to the possibilities that we have in nature. This made it necessary for also women to be included in work. Especially during the Second World War the Finnish women took a huge step in the working life. When men were at war, the society was running with the ones who stayed home.

Until the 1950-century, half of the population in Finland made their living with agriculture and forestry. Urbanization and the change in the construction of livelihood changed the situation so that only a few were working in the “old” professions, like agriculture and forestry. Besides urbanization also education of women was part of the reason why fewer women were working in agriculture by the year 1970.

Industrialization started affecting Finland in 1860. Industrialization is a key factor when studying the reasons why women were able to start working. As industrialization started to be more common, the Finnish industry also needed more work forces, meaning that also women were needed. As the industrialization in Finland started in 1860-century, it had two special features compared to other countries. First of all it came to Finland fairly late, and second of all both men and women started to work at the same time.

Since there was a need in work force and more women were hired, it meant that also the legislation had to be changed. In 1864 the law was changed so that women over 25-years old were no longer under the authority of their fathers, as they were able to provide for themselves and handle their own matters. This did not mean the married women, who were still under the custody of their husbands. (Hentilä, 2006)

## **2.2 The independency of the working woman**

Even though the women in Finland were able to start working with men, it still did not mean they were equal. Women were considered as cheap labor, since, for example, at the beginning of the 1900-century, women were paid only 2/3 of the salary men were paid. During the wars the difference in the salaries increased,

making the salaries of women only half the amount that was paid for men. (Hentilä, 2006)

The new law in 1864 enabling unmarried women to work and provide themselves was a good start. It was still not until year 1919 when it was possible for a married woman to get a job without the permission from her husband and even until 1929 when the marriage law came into force relieving women from the custody of their husbands and having the right for their own property. (Hentilä, 2006)

Not until the year 1962 a law “same work, same payment” came into force. This law stated that the same salary should be paid for the same work done, no matter what the gender. (Hentilä, 2006)

1987 a law on the equality between men and women in work life came into force; the meaning of this law was to decrease discrimination between sexes and to improve women positions especially in working life. (terveysministeriö, 2016)

An equal working environment is a fairly new thing in the Finnish society which explains well some of the opinions and ideas nowadays. It is still noted that most of the women in working life are working in less paid vacancies, whereas men are working in more valued works. (Mietala, 2001)

### **3 Female on a male dominant working environment**

The differences between man and a woman are often at the table also in the working life. Men are described to be intelligent, straightforward, opinions based on facts, good leaders and being more work-related. Women are described to be more nurturing, keener on the atmosphere than about the leading, not being straightforward, thinking based on their own experiences and being emotional.

Instead of pointing out the differences between sexes and by this reinforcing the stereotypes, we could have conversation of the similarities. Both men and women are described to be motivated, intelligence, impulsive, responsible and to have abilities to leadership. In fact there are not that many differences between the sexes than between individuals. The differences between the social status and the activities of

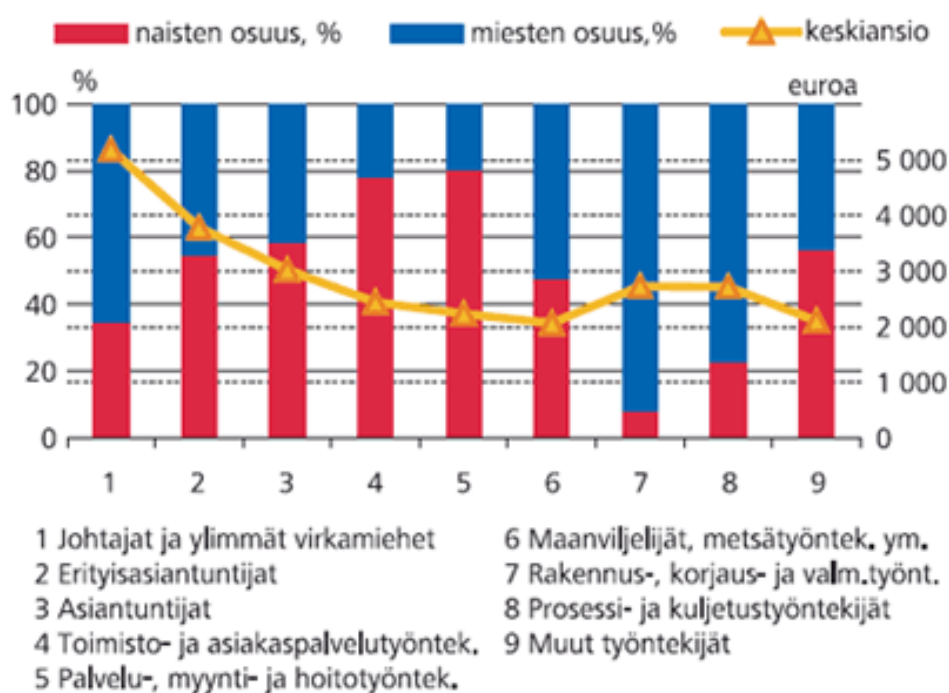


men and women are mostly made up socially and culturally. This makes it changeable.

During year 2017 it is not one of the seven world wonders that a women is in working life. Yet still, some of the industries are considered to be manlier or more feminine. As the statistics show this is in fact very true; some fields are more male dominant whereas some fields are more female dominant.

Often male dominant fields are more appreciated than the female dominant fields; this is visible for example in the salaries. The male dominant jobs are usually better paid and female dominant work is less paid. This is a product from the history that has not still quite changed. (Mietala, 2001)

#### Palkansaajarakenne ja keskiansio ammattiluokituksen mukaan 2009



1 Statistic of the structure and the average earnings of the employees according to the professions in Finland 2009<sup>1</sup>

As can be seen in the statistics the most female dominant profession is service and nurturing, whereas the most male dominant fields are construction and repair fields. (Tilastokeskus, 2011)

<sup>1</sup> (Tilastokeskus, 2011)

The appreciation of male dominant professions is also visible in the amount of influence the specific unions have. The size of the union does not actually affect to the power they have. For example when compared the cleaning industry and the paper industry; which are same in size. The paper industry has more influence than the cleaners. Then compared the office workers and the machine operators, both are equally as small in size, yet the operators have more influence as a union. Both of the parties having more influence are male dominant industries. The factor giving more power in influence is in fact not the size of the working union, but the dominant gender.

It is also pointed out that maybe it is about who is able to make the biggest economical losses if they would stop working. This is used to justify the power relationships. In fact also the office workers are able to cause huge economical losses and to stop the factory from working by not selling the goods anymore. This has happened in Finland during the industrial functionary strike. Knowing this I find it hard to reason why the male dominant unions still have more influence. (Martikainen, 1996)

### **3.1 A woman on a male dominant profession**

When working on a male dominant work place, the feminine features are not usually considered to be as a benefit. The physical strength of women is also usually discussed, even though weak men also appear. How can women cope in a male dominant field? Are there some benefits of having a mixed sex working environment?

Many women working in a male dominant working environment have faced discrimination or sexual harassment. The five most common ways of discrimination are ignoring, not sharing information, discriminating someone by making fun of them, shaming or by “double punishing”, meaning that no matter what one does it will be wrong anyway. Many women feel that they constantly have to prove themselves to be recognized as good as their male colleagues. (Mietala, 2001)

As women are physically often weaker than the male co-workers they may feel a need to compensate it on other ways. This can be seen as “over achieving” or as trying to act like men. Maybe if you don’t have the muscle strength you can be able to compensate it with something else.

The discrimination and sexual harassment is also something that also men have to experience in working life especially when working in female dominant fields. (Mietala, 2001)

Why is it that when the norms are not followed problems exist?

### **3.2 The resistance to change**

The resistance to change is often normal when encountering a new situation. For example a woman coming to the workplace that has usually been consisting of only males can bring both positive and negative reactions. The most common fears rising in the work life are divided into economic, social and personal fears.

As a woman enters a male dominant working environment the social fears can for example mean the fear of losing your position (you used to be the best able seamen on board) or the fear that the atmosphere on board will change dramatically due to the women coming. These fears may lead to the fact that resistance against the more equal industry start to exist.

The personal fears can be that the work itself will be harder or more negative. If a woman comes to the work place will she be weak? Do I have to do the work for her? If there is a female captain, will she be stricter than the male ones? Will she make my life miserable?

The economic fears can be for example a fear of being unemployed. If women will be in the sea industry does it mean that the vacancies for men are decreasing? If they are as good as we will they take our jobs? This is one of the fears that were in the beginning as can be seen from the acts of the Seamen Union.

It is very likely that these are still the existing facts that are part of the resistance that women have to face when going into a manly field.

A good thing to remember is that the resistance of change is not here to stay; it is usually easy to overcome by going through the things that are actually good in the change. Maybe the new situation brings something good? For example in working life as in general equality is always good and it helps both sexes. If the atmosphere is open the change will be easier. (Mietala, 2001)

## **4 Beliefs and superstitions of women's at sea**

### **4.1 A woman on board is bad luck**

Among seafaring there exist a lot of superstitions, which are most probably due to the unpredictable sea and the will to believe that a human could by his acts influence to the weather? Especially during the time of the sailing vessels-when the weather was not as easily predicted- a lot of myths of how to keep the sea gods satisfied and the sea state calm, were believed in.

The superstitions are not followed nowadays among the crew but they still go as a tradition from one generation to the next one. As most of the people deny of believing in the superstitions anymore, they might still unconsciously follow them. These types of beliefs are for example not to shave beard during the sailing, not to whistle on board, not to take bananas on board and that a woman on board brings bad luck. (Ronca, 2015)

### **4.2 The ship is referred as she**

It is one of the best known beliefs that a woman on board would give bad luck for the ship and its crew. The superstitions may be explained due to the fact that the vessel was referred as "she" and bringing a woman on board would make the vessel jealous. One way of interpreting the myth is that the sea gods would get angry and lead the vessel into a terrible storm. Believing in the sea gods would explain the rumours of throwing women who were found on board into the sea as a sacrifice to the gods. (Bhattacharjee, 2017)

One reason why the ships are referred as she is explained with the similarities between the vessel and women. As Pekka Lavòn states in his book (Runsaat neljäkymmentä vuotta rahti- ja matkustajaliikenteen pestissä, 1994) there are at least ten similarities:

1. At first they are both beautiful to watch
2. A man needs to guide them
3. All of a sudden they take over control
4. Neither of them can handle overload
5. You can't rig without mens' help
6. They usually change names when they change the owner
7. The maintenance costs more than the owner had prepared to pay
8. They can take the man into depths
9. You have to fix and paint them before going out
10. Within years they become difficult, feeble and hard to steer. (Lavòn, 1994)

### **4.3 Mermaids eating sailors**

Or maybe the myth comes mainly from the other bedtime stories that used to be told. Mermaids have been seen as a dangerous type of a fictional creature-also a female creature-that sings to the sailors, making them to want to jump overboard into their deep graves. Mermaids were also told to eat the sailors alive after they were allured to come to the sea.

So maybe the most likely reason for the superstition of woman being bad luck was that a woman on board would cause jealousy and arguments among the crew. As the sea voyages were long and the sailors couldn't behave themselves, it was thought to be better to keep the women off from the ships.

### **4.4 Protection from female figures**

On the contradiction, especially at the older vessels, there has been a topless female figure in the bow of the vessel. The meaning of this vessel was most likely to guard the ship by "embarrassing" the nature. Which perfectly makes sense, the sea was too humiliated to make waves. The figure has traditionally also both eyes wide open,

since females were thought to be good navigators even though they were not welcomed on board. (Ronca, 2015)

Whatever has been the reason for these myths; there have still been women on board even during the sail ships time. And believe it or not even bananas have been transported on board vessels, without sinking of the ship.

## **5 Women in seafaring in Finland**

### **5.1 Increase of women in seafaring**

After the era of sailing vessels the steam ships started to be more common in the maritime industry. The culture of passenger vessels started to develop due to the regular passenger routes. The regular routes were born on account of when the steam ships became common in 1830. As the passenger vessels increased, so did the amount of females working in maritime industry.

The development of the steam ships and the passenger vessel was very quick. It is said that it was actually the quick change in technology that was the starting point for the women working in seafaring business. As quick as in 50 years the steam ships had become the most common vessel type, due to the travel efficiency that was gained in time compared to sailing vessels. By the year 1880 it was more common to use a steam ship, when it came to delivering mail or carrying passengers. This also meant an increase in the women working at sea. By the year 1880 the majority of the service staff working on board was females.

The passenger vessels were one of the cornerstones for women to be “accepted” to the sea industry. As the nursing and caretaking was considered to be more of a female job, a lot of women were hired as to the professions that the employers defined to be suitable for women and to be vacancies that demanded barely any tradecraft. These vacancies were i.e. the cleaning lady, waitress and the chef that provides the cold foods.

At the beginning of the 1900- century the Finnish Seamen Union together with the employers and shipping companies negotiated these suitable professions. As can be noticed, due to the legacy of these negotiations, most of the women at sea are still

working in the vacancies that were agreed on over 100 years ago. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## **5.2 Limiting the use of female workforce**

One of the official faces that were against women working at sea was the Finnish Union of Seamen. After the founding of the Union in 1916 it wanted to ban women at sea entirely. The Union however had to accept the women working in the stewards department, since the total ban of the women working at sea was too ambitious.

The reason why the Union would have wanted to ban women from working was because the women were paid half the pay that men were and they were working extra hours without any compensation. The Union was afraid that this would affect the industry so that the shipping companies would only want to hire women and the men will be unemployed. Which is also what happened since the shipping companies liked the cheap work force and the way the women took care of their jobs. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## **5.3 1928 Seamen's law**

Since the women had well-established their position on passenger vessels as waitresses and cleaners (which were considered to be feminine jobs) the Finnish Union for Seafarers tried to focus on banning women from the long ocean voyages and from cargo vessels. As the Finnish Union for Seamen failed to ban women in the seafaring industry, they started to try to ban women from working at the ocean going vessels (other than the Baltic Sea) and on cargo vessels at 1920. The purposes with these banns were to limit and weaken the status women had in the seafaring industry and to limit the well paid sea jobs for men only.

The debate for and against women was going strong at the beginning of 1920. The Committee of Sea Labour had various opinions concerning this, some of the members thought that - since women are naturally suitable for cooking and cleaning- it should be possible for the shipping companies to hire them also for the cargo vessels, for limited vacancies.

Karl Ahonen, who was at the time the chairman of the Finnish Union for Seafarers, stated that the Union stands fully behind the new law proposition. One of the opponents of the new law proposal was Hedvig Gebhard (from Kokoomuspuolue) pointed out that the only reason why women were tried to be banned from working on board was just an excuse to limit the working possibilities of women. Gebhard thought that the Finnish men and women could take care of themselves when concerning the moral issues, without the guidance of law. The degradation of moral was one of the biggest concerns and reason why the party of social democrats were very against the female labour at sea. According to Karl Wiik having a woman on board would mean that eventually everyone on board would have a sexually transmitted disease and the expenses for the Finnish government would grow as they would be obliged to transport the women with STDs back to Finland and then offer them treatment.

Eventually at the year 1928 the Seamen's law stated that women were not allowed to work on board long voyage ocean going ships (not including the Baltic Sea and the North Sea). The decision can be thought as a compromise, since the Seamen's Union was still not happy, but wrote a letter to the Social ministry that stated that their goal was to ban women on board every cargo vessel.

1929 the Union for Seafarers started to demand better education for the male stewards and cooks, since it was considered that the male cooks were more likely to keep the ingredients fresh during the voyages, unlike female cooks. After a couple of months the Union admitted that the new modern education was an attempt to get the women off from the seafaring industry, again. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## **5.4 Women and the Finnish Union for Seafarers**

From the beginning of 1900 century it was clear that the Finnish Union for Seafarers was against women working at sea. It was one of the old-fashioned aims for the Union to try to keep women out from the maritime industry, stated Paavo Koskinen one of the chairmen of the Finnish Union for Seafarers.

Since the Union did not succeed in removing the female workforce they started to recruit them. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)



The Finnish Union for Seafarers requested help from Sweden and Norway in recruiting women to the union. Sweden and Norway had an own union for the female seafarers. The chairwomen of the Norway's Seafarers union was asked to write a small article for Finland so that the Finnish Union would look keen on recruiting women. Even though Wälläri asked for help, the Finnish Union decided to do the recruiting in their own way. No separate union for women was founded.

Despite of the ban on the ocean voyages, more and more women were working at sea. The Seafarers Union hired Edit Mast as the first women agent to the union office at year 1935. The argument explaining why females should be part of the union was the same as with cheap labour. The women would not be stamping down the salaries of men if they would get better salaries themselves.

The recruiting of the Union actually improved the working conditions for women. In year 1937 the Finnish Steamship Corporation did improve the salaries with ten percent. The Union estimated that approximately one of four women on the foreign traffic had joined the Union.

Eventhough the Union was promoting better salaries for women, the increasing of women for maritime vacancies was still opposed inside the Union. On the other hand Niilo Wälläri also brought up the issue of long working days among the stewards department, which at the time was mostly concerning women. The Finnish Maritime Administration should have execute retributions due to the fact that law was not followed and the issue was brought up to them - yet nothing happened. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## **5.5 Repealing the Seamen's law**

Finally in 1955 the ban denying women from working at certain sea jobs was repealed. The new law established hiring women over 20-years-old to all vacancies at traffic area.

The reason why the law was changed was because the shipping companies wanted to hire women for these vacancies. The passenger routes to North and South-America were established and since women were common on the same vacancies on other routes it made sense to hire them for these new routes also. In addition that woman

were common in certain vacancies, it was also a deep-rooted belief that women were also better at these vacancies and still women were paid less than the male colleagues.

Loyal to their habits, the Finnish Union for Seafarers was again against the new law. The well-known chairman of the Union, Niilo Wälläri, gave a comment from an expert point of view stating that the Union was strictly against of repealing the ban. Reasons for the resistance were that “women cause arguments at sea” and that “sailors are against the repealing of the law”.

This time the Union was not able to affect the repealing of the law. In fact after first banning and then resisting the women to be on board, the Union had to guide its members to treat the women fairly since they would be working in increasing amounts at sea in the future. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## **5.6 Adapting women to the sea industry**

As the Finnish Union of Seamen was actively attempting to get the women off from ships, the British one actually took as its duty to also drive the rights of the female workers also. The reasons behind defending both the female and the male workers, was that if the women would get bad salary it would also decrease the salaries of the male workers. Whereas the increase in the women’s salaries would mean that also the male workers would still be able to hold on to their good salaries.

In Sweden and in Norway the female sailors had their own union, unlike in Finland. Not until year 1935 did the Finnish Seamen Union took into concern the women at sea. The women were tried to be more involved within the Union, yet the Seamen’s law -banning women from long-ocean going vessels- was still in force for almost over 20 years. This model where women were taken into consideration was copied from Sweden and Norway, even though the execution was still different. The Finnish women did not get their own Union.

In Finland, the Union did not advocate for the women’s working rights until the year 1956, instead they were just trying to get them off from the industry. (Mäenpää;Aartomaa;& Malinen, 2008)

## 6 Women at sea nowadays

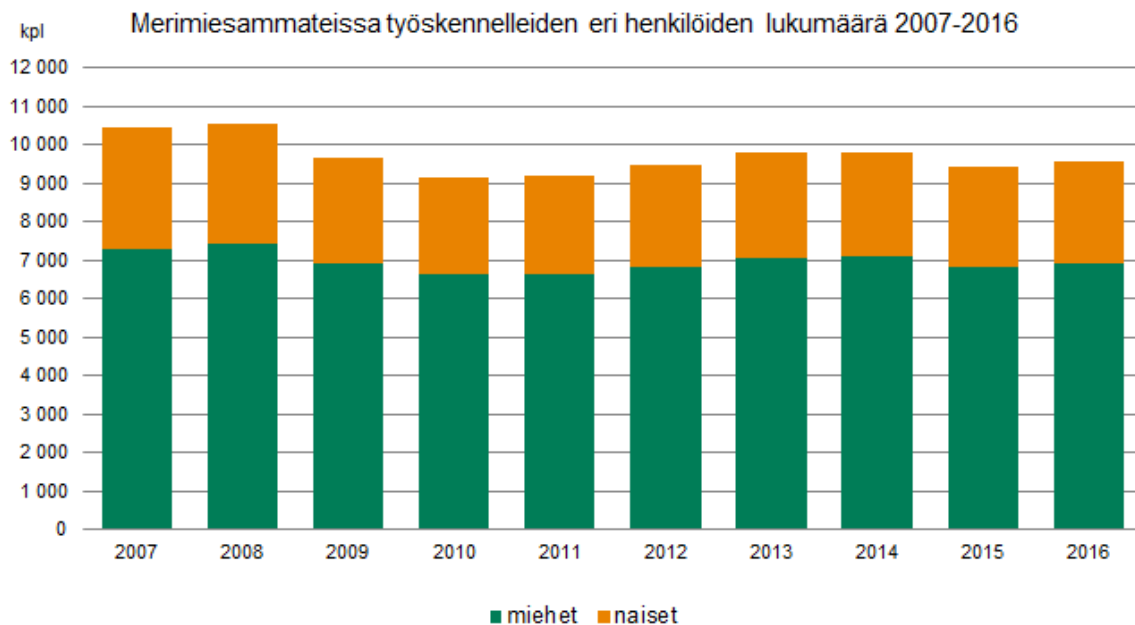
It was a long way until women were able to do other jobs not under the catering compartment. Some of the women dressed up as men so that they would have been able to work as sailors.

The first female Master Mariner in Finland was Arja Rauramo at year 1974; she graduated from Kotka Maritime School. (Lavòn, 1994)

### 6.1 Statistics of the sex distribution on Finnish vessels

Trafi (Transport Safety Agency in Finland) keeps statistics of seamen serving in the Finnish vessels. These statistics also include the foreign sailors working in the Finnish fleet. The Finnish seamen working abroad are also included in this statistic in case they are available to get in contact.

The statistics are based on the info got from the Seamen register and are published between April and May. This statistic is showing all the maritime professions ( deck, engine, catering, etc).



<sup>2</sup>The sex distribution between male and females

<sup>2</sup> (Trafi, 2017)

As seen in the statistic above the amount of seafarers has decreased with almost a thousand in a ten years time. The decrease in the female and in the male workers has been equal.

During year 2007 29% of the seafarers serving in Finnish fleet were female workers. The amount of female seafarers was 3000, whereas male seafarers was 7500 from the total amount of 10500. In almost ten years the amount has dropped with approximately thousand seafarers, making the amount of females in the sea industry 2500 and the amount of male 7000. The procentual difference in female seafarers between year 2007 and 2016 was 3% (from 29% to 26%). Whereas the male seafarers had increased with 3% (from 71% to 74%).

## 6.2 Differences between compartments

This statistic separates the different departments' onboard vessels. The departments are divided into deck, engine and catering department.

**Taulukko 4.** Merimiesammateissa tehdyt henkilötyövuodet sukupuolen mukaan ammattiryhmittäin, 2016

**Tabell 4.** Årsverken i sjömansyrken enligt kön och yrkesgrupp, 2016

Ammattiryhmä Yrkesgrupp	Ulkomaan liikenne Utrikes trafik			Kotimaan liikenne Inrikes trafik			Kaikkiaan Totalt		
	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt	Miehet Män	Naiset Kvinnor	Yhteensä Totalt
	Henkilötyövuotta – Årsverken								
<b>Kansiosasto – Däcksavdelningen</b>									
päällystö – befäl.....	894	37	931	238	3	241	1 133	39	1 172
miehistö – manskap.....	878	56	934	187	29	217	1 065	85	1 150
<b>Yhteensä – Totalt.....</b>	<b>1 772</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>1 865</b>	<b>426</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>457</b>	<b>2 198</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>2 322</b>
<b>Koneosasto – Maskinavdelningen</b>									
päällystö – befäl.....	653	7	659	122	0	122	774	7	781
miehistö – manskap.....	533	13	546	26	0	27	559	13	572
<b>Yhteensä – Totalt.....</b>	<b>1 186</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>1 205</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>148</b>	<b>1 334</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1 353</b>
<b>Taloussasto – Ekonomiavdelningen</b>									
ravintolahenkilökunta – restaurangpersonal... ..	1 108	1 177	2 285	13	15	28	1 121	1 192	2 313
hotellihenkilökunta – hotellpersonal.....	76	172	249	–	1	1	76	173	249
myymälähenkilökunta – försäljningspersonal..	121	131	253	–	0	0	121	131	253
muu palveluhenkilökunta – övrig servicepersonal	131	26	157	1	0	1	132	26	158
<b>Yhteensä – Totalt.....</b>	<b>1 436</b>	<b>1 507</b>	<b>2 943</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1 451</b>	<b>1 523</b>	<b>2 974</b>
<b>Kaikkiaan – I allt.....</b>	<b>4 394</b>	<b>1 619</b>	<b>6 013</b>	<b>588</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>636</b>	<b>4 982</b>	<b>1 667</b>	<b>6 649</b>

<sup>3</sup>Statistic showing the male and female sailors in Finnish shipping industry

<sup>3</sup> (Trafi L. t., 2016)

As the statistics show the most common department onboard for women is still the catering compartment. There the women are more represented than men.

When looking at the other compartments the situation is completely different. The deck compartment (including the crew, officers and masters) has only 124 from the total amount of 2 322 - making the percentage amount of women on deck departments as 5%.

On the engine side the numbers are even smaller. The amount of women on engine department (including all vacancies) is 20 from the total amount of 1 353- this makes the percentage amount only 1, 5%.

These statistics show how hard old habits and opinions stick. Almost a hundred years ago was decided that females suit better into the waitressing and cleaning positions and still after hundred years, most of the women working onboard are as cleaners and other service personnel.

## **7 Research methods**

The research method used was quantitative. The questionnaire made was anonymous in case the subject was sensitive for some people. The questions were made easy to answer, so that data would be easy to analyse and collect. The answers were collected so that alternative answers were given to every question.

### **7.1 The questionnaire**

The questionnaire was sent out with a brief letter explaining the study done and with questions made for both genders and with questions made gender specific. The general questions were made to study the backgrounds of the study group.

After the general questions, a couple of gender specific questions were performed. It is not possible to ask from the male sailors that how do they feel in a female dominant vessel, since those do not exist.

The questions were made so that it will be easy to make statistics out of the answers. Space for more specific answers and explanations was. This enables the study group to tell more detailed about their opinions.

## **7.2 Target group**

The questionnaire was made by sending it to the students in Novia Yrkeshögsskolan Aboa Mare navigationsinstitutet and for a Facebook group consisting of old sailors.

The main goal was to figure out the existing opinions on cargo vessels specifically.

The target group was selected so that the students answering would bring their view as the new generation and the older sailors would reflect an image of the existing opinions and the opinions that used to be.

Some of the questionnaires were send to female sailors I have worked on board. Seeing it would be hard to get in touch with female sailors and both genders were needed to conduct the study.

## **8 The research answers**

The questionnaire was made by using Google forms. This method made it easy to interview a greater amount of audience. The questionnaire was send by e-mail and it was shared in a Facebook group, Merimies.

The Google form creates statistics itself and therefore is easy and quick to use in a questionnaire like this.

The questionnaire was made anonymously and the study language was English.

### **8.1 The amount of answers and the validation of the answer**

The amount of answers was 76 and the questionnaire was available for seven days. Most of the answers were given in English, yet some voluntary explanations were given in Finnish. Altogether 55 men and 21 women answered the questionnaire. In the answering group there were eight who were non-Finns, the rest were Finnish.

The amount of answers that were not valid was one. The reason for this was because the background of the answer does not fit to any of the people that the questionnaire was sent to. The answer that was not valid will still be analysed as its own, since the

person who answered the questionnaire still had to have effort to answer even though he/she wrote a provocative answer. This also states something about the atmosphere and opinions.

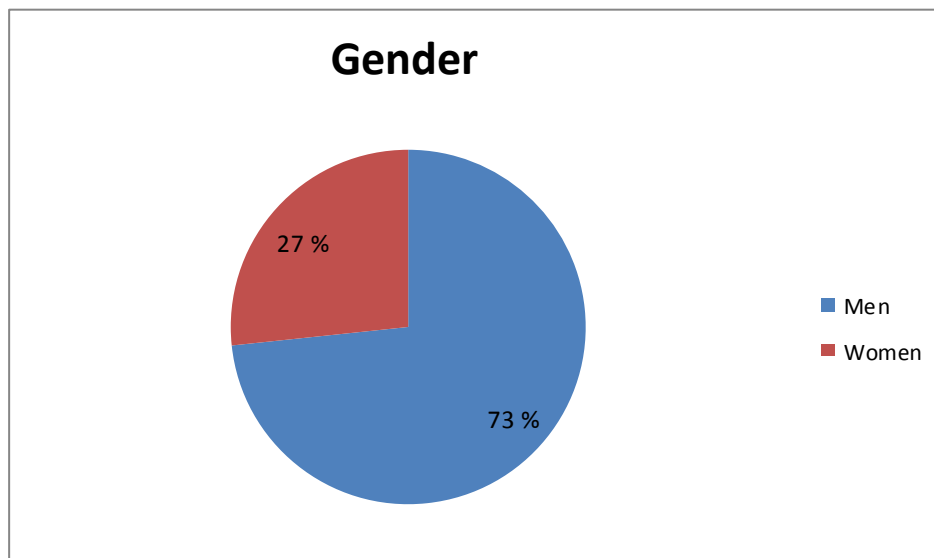
Due to the invalidation of one answer the number of answers given will be only 75.

## 8.2 Analysing the answers

Analysing the questionnaire will happen by going through the questions one by one. In each section the question itself will be explained and the statistic of it will be shown.

### 8.2.1 Background information

The wanted background information was gender, age, nationality, work experience, working time and position.

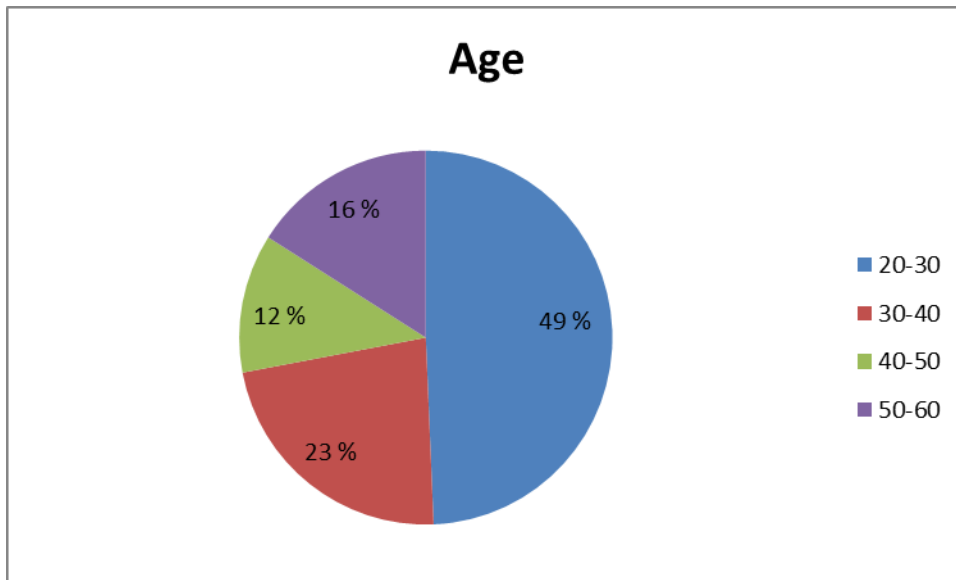


<sup>4</sup>Picture: The gender distribution between those who answered

From the valid answers 27% of those who answered were women and 73% were men. The sea industry is considered a male dominant industry, this statistic supports it.

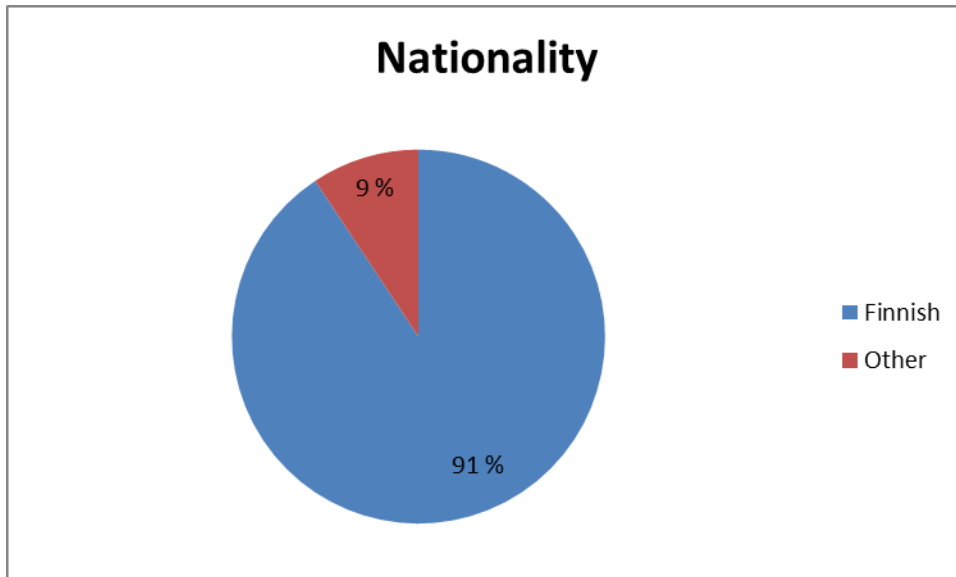
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<sup>4</sup>The questionnaire – Question 1



<sup>5</sup>Picture: Age distribution between the ones who answered

The above statistic show that the most of the study group were between 20-30 years. After this the most answers were gathered from 30-40 years old. From the study group 16% were between the age 50-60 and the smallest group was from 40-50 with 12%.



<sup>6</sup>Picture: The nationality of the ones who answered

From the study group 91% were Finnish, whereas only nine percent were other nationalities. These other nationalities were from and outside from Europe.

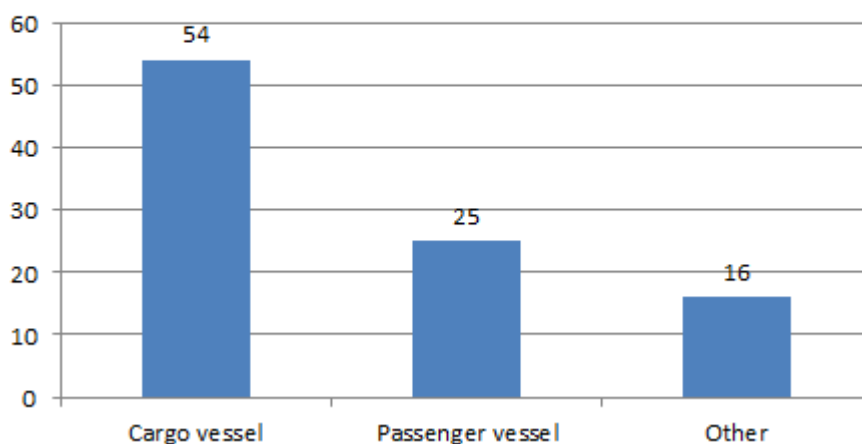
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<sup>5</sup> The questionnaire – Question 2

<sup>6</sup> The questionnaire – Question 3



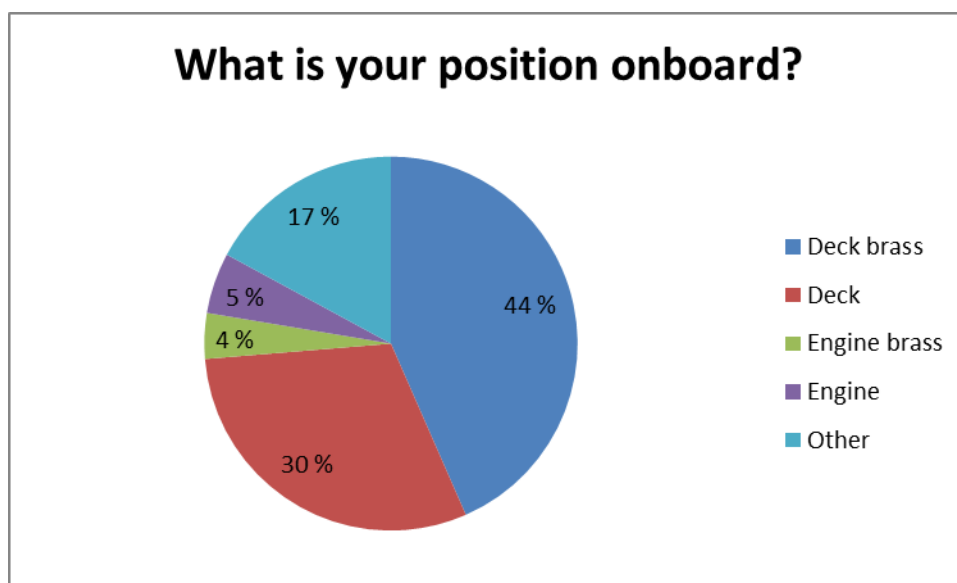
### Where are you currently working on/have worked on?



#### <sup>7</sup>Working experience

The working experience question was a multiple choice question. From the study group 54 had been or were at the moment on a cargo vessel, 25 had been on passenger vessels and 16 had been on other vessels. The other vessels included icebreakers, oil tankers, offshore, research vessels, tugs, survey vessels and sailing vessels.

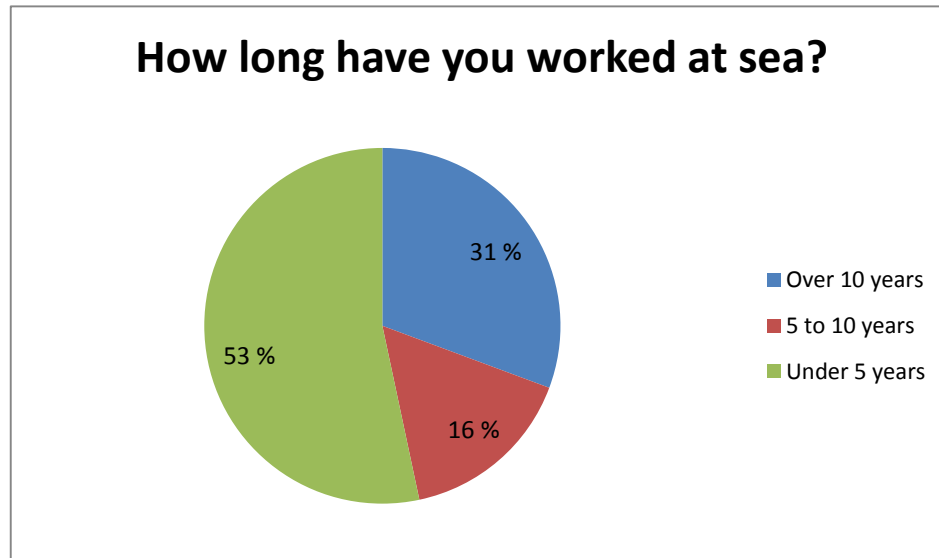
Even though the study focuses on cargo vessels, also the answers given from the ones who also had been working on passenger vessels or other were accepted.



#### <sup>8</sup>Picture: The distribution between positions on board

<sup>7</sup> The questionnaire – Question 4

The majority with 44% belonged to the deck brass, 30% of the study group belonged to the deck crew. To the engine brass from the study group belonged only four percent and to the engine crew only five percent. The group other was 17% of the answers and consisted of for example trainees who had not worked on board yet, cadets and the catering stuff.



<sup>9</sup>Picture: Distribution between the working times

The majority of the study group had worked under five years at sea; this is maybe due to the answers sent via school mail. The ones who had been working for over 10 years were the second largest group with 31%. 16% was the size of the group who had been working between five to 10 years.

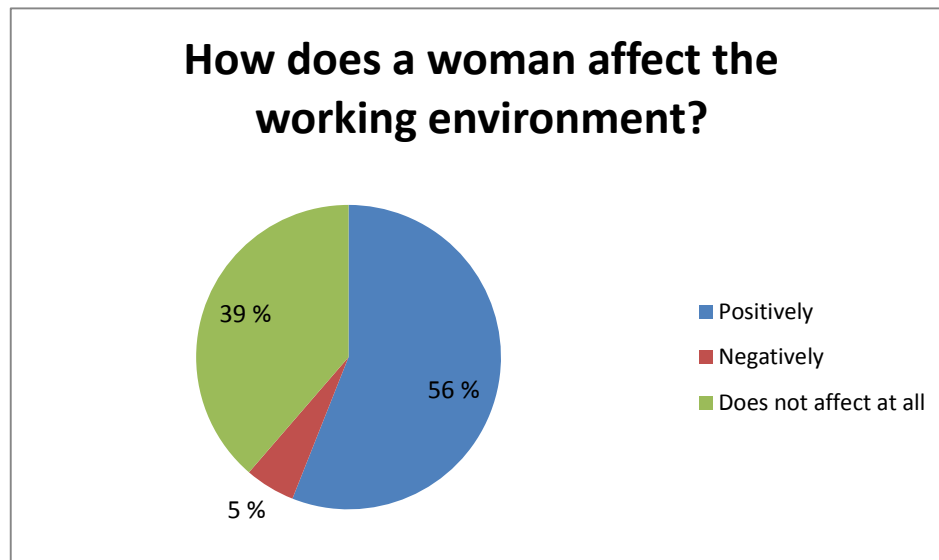
### 8.2.2 The general questions

The general questions were to be answered by both sexes. These questions were: How does a women affect the working environment, Have you noticed any sexual harassment or discrimination, Have you self-experienced any harassment or discrimination and do female sailors differ from male sailors?

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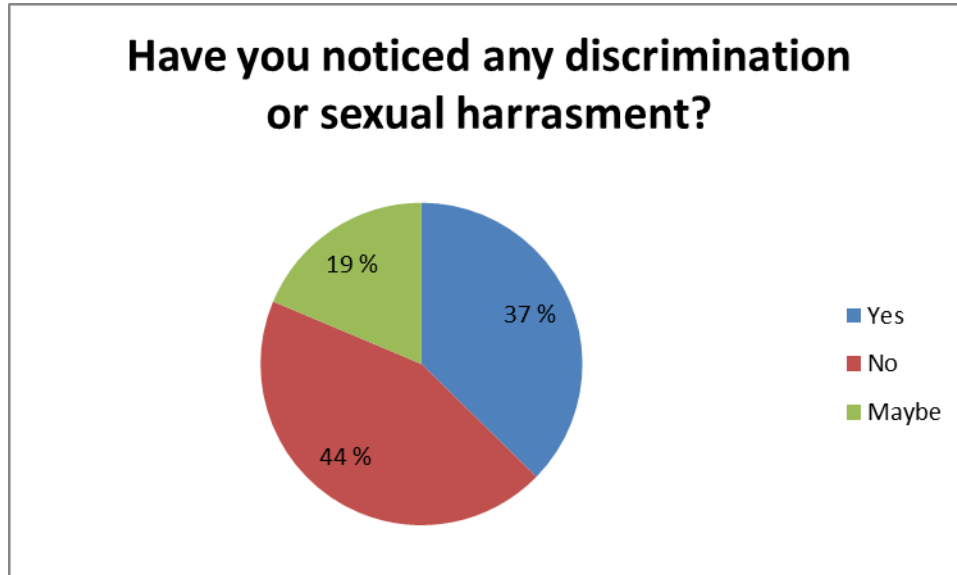
<sup>8</sup> The questionnaire – Question 5

<sup>9</sup> The questionnaire – Question 6



<sup>10</sup>Picture: Distribution of how sailors feel of having a woman on board

56% of the study group answered that a woman affects positively to the working environment. 39% of the study group thought that a woman does not affect at all to the working environment and five percent thought that women have a negative impact.

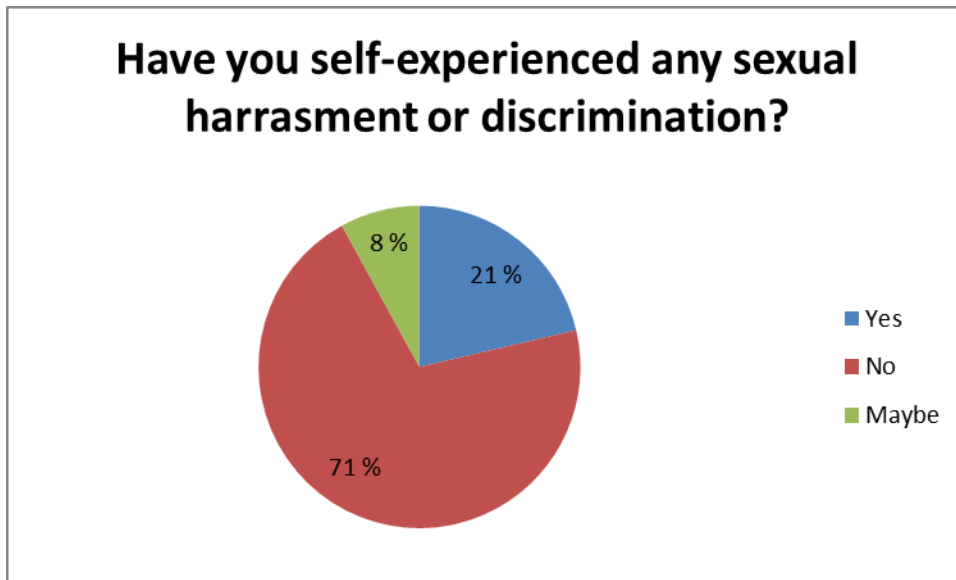


<sup>11</sup>Picture: Have you noticed any discrimination or sexual harassment?

From the study group 44% had not noticed any sexual harassment or discrimination. 37% had definitely noticed sexual harassment or discrimination and 19% was not sure if they had noticed anything.

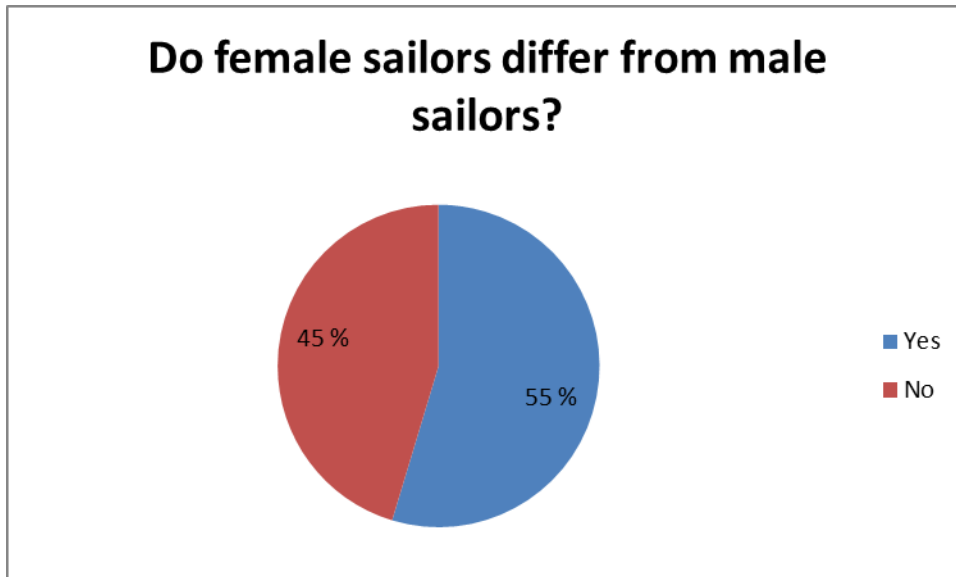
<sup>10</sup>The questionnaire – Question 7

<sup>11</sup>The questionnaire – Question 8



<sup>12</sup>Picture: Have you self-experienced any sexual harassment or discrimination?

Only 21% from the study group had self-experienced sexual harassment or discrimination. Eight percent of the answerers were not sure if they had experienced harassment or discrimination and 71% were sure they had not faced anything on board.



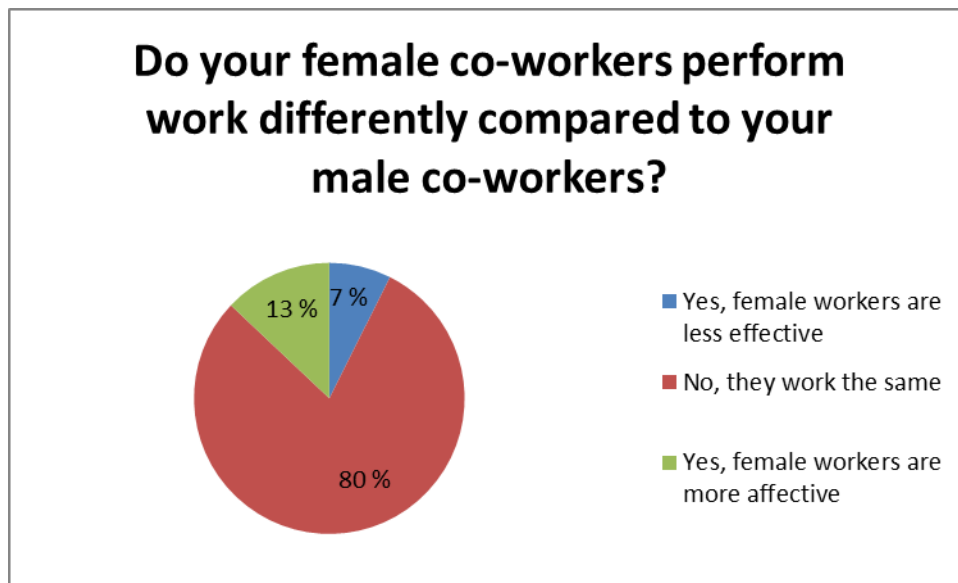
<sup>13</sup>Picture: Do female sailors differ from male sailors?

When asked do female sailors differ from male sailors, 55% of the study group answered that they feel that female sailors do differ from male sailors. 45% answered no they do not differ.

<sup>12</sup> The questionnaire – Question 9

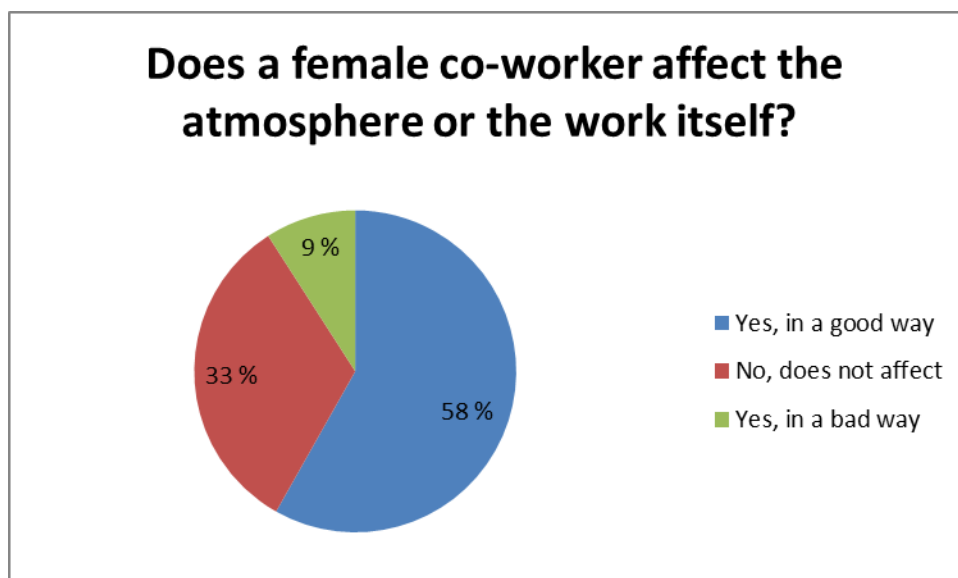
<sup>13</sup> The questionnaire – Question 10

### 8.2.3 Questions for men



<sup>14</sup>Picture: Do your female co-workers perform work differently compared to your male co-workers?

From the male answerers the majority with 80% thought that female sailors work the same. 13% from the male part of study group thought that female workers are more affective and seven percent thought that female workers are less effective than their male co-workers.



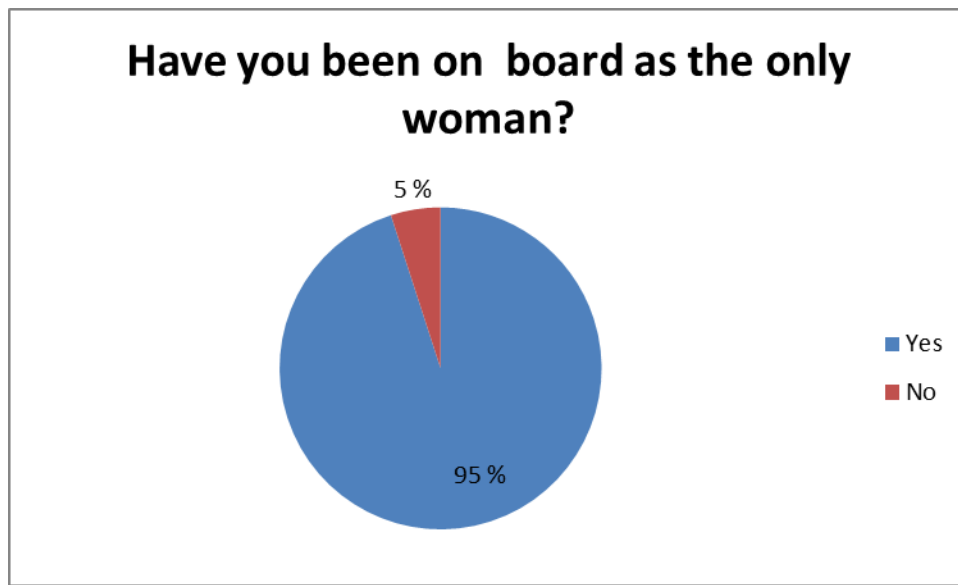
<sup>15</sup>Picture: Does a female co-worker affect the atmosphere or the work itself?

<sup>14</sup> The questionnaire – Question 11

<sup>15</sup> The questionnaire – Question 12

The majority with 58% of the male who answered thought that a female co-worker affects the atmosphere in a good way. 33% thought that a female does not affect the work or atmosphere in any way. Nine percent thought that female co-workers affect the atmosphere and work in a bad way.

#### 8.2.4 Questions for women

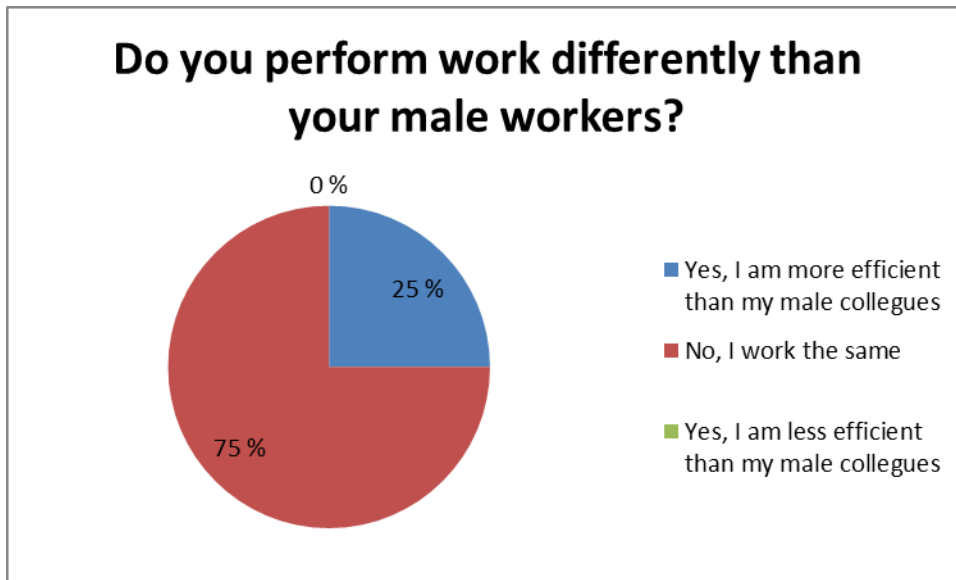


<sup>16</sup>Picture: Have you been on board as the only woman?

From the females who answered 95% said they had been on board as the only woman. Only five percent answered that they had not been on board as the only woman.

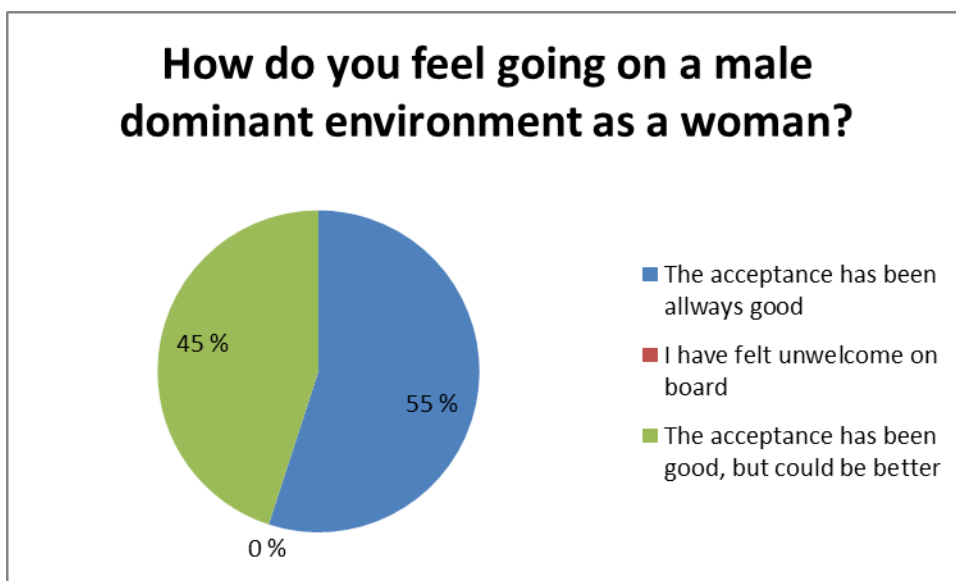
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<sup>16</sup> The questionnaire – Question 13



<sup>17</sup>Picture: Do you perform work differently than your male co-workers?

Most of the women (75%) felt that they work the same as their male colleagues. 25% of the women thought that they are more efficient than their male colleagues.



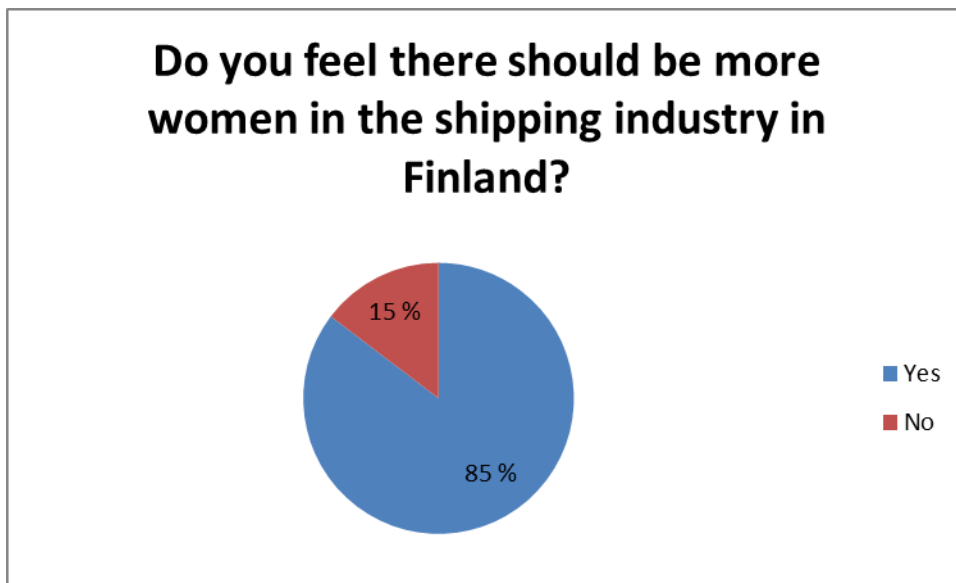
<sup>18</sup>Picture: How do you feel going on a male dominant environment as a woman?

Dividing the women in almost half, the acceptance on board had always been good answered 55% of the study group. 45% answered that the acceptance had been good, but could be better.

<sup>17</sup> The questionnaire – Question 14

<sup>18</sup> The questionnaire – Question 15

### 8.2.5 Women in the Finnish sea industry



<sup>19</sup>Picture: Do you feel there should be more women in the shipping industry in Finland?

Majority of the people who answered thought that there should be more women in the sea industry in Finland. Only 15% thought that there should not be more women. This question was a mandatory question, and forced people to answer. More about how people felt about this will be told in the chapter 10.1.

### 8.2.6 Non-valid answer

One of the answers received in the questionnaire was from a person that was not compatible for the study group that the questionnaire was performed for. The background information the person gave made it clear that the answer was a provocative answer and therefore not to be counted with the rest of the answers.

Even though the answer was a provocative one, it is still very useful for this thesis. The time one has spent to make a false answer tells a lot of the attitudes concerning the subject.

The non-valid answer was stating that women differ from male sailors since “They have no balls” and they have a negative impact on board because “It’s the hormones!” This person was also very concerned since, according to him/her “making a study like

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<sup>19</sup> The questionnaire – Question 16



this only represents the insecurity of the one making the study". In the end of the answer he/she also thought that Finland should have more female sailors due to "White (girl) power!"

As can be pointed out from this answer, the subject is very sensitive for some people and provokes mixed feelings on behalf and against. Therefore the subject is still important to discuss about.

## **9 Analysing the study**

In this chapter the analysing of the answers from the questionnaire will be done in more details. A critical examination will also be conducted and the factor whether there is a need for a new study based on this one.

### **9.1 Conclusions of the study**

The questionnaire was well succeeded; the amount of answers and the differences inside the study group gave a good opportunity to compare the prevalent opinions among sailors. The largest age group answering was from 20-30 years old. The majority of the answers came from men 73% and the rest came from women.

The hypothesis for the study was that older people would feel that a woman on board is not a positive thing, since this is how it used to be. The answers in the questionnaire however pointed out the opposite. People from ages 30-60 and over were more open for females on board than people from ages 20-30. Majority of the answers, 53%, were from sailors who had worked less than five years at sea.

The ship type (passenger vessel, cargo vessel, supply vessel) did not have any impact on the opinions. Most of the ones who answered had been working on multiple different ship types.

The strongest opinions to oppose women at sea came from the younger sailors. Some of the sailors under 30 years felt that women on board do not have to work as hard as men to earn their job. Women on board were thought to get better positions easier than male colleagues due to their gender. Women were thought to be flirting or by just acting feminine, to get the vacancies desired. According to the answers that

stated that women have a negative impact on board the reason was that women work less and avoid hard tasks like lifting heavy objects. Women were thought to cause extra tension among men by distracting the men *“younger crew members will try to impress the new female colleagues and by this do not focus on their jobs”*. The reason why women were thought to have a negative impact on board was also since *“some women are on board just to enjoy the attention they get”*.

Sailors who were older and/or had sailed longer had kinder admittance for females coming on board. The rank on board also affected the opinions, the higher the status - the more positive feelings towards mixed sex-crews.

The ones stating that women have a positive impact on board thought that: *“women make the otherwise so masculine environment softer and more pleasant”*. More than half from the answers (55%) stated that female sailors differ from the male sailors. The female impact was seen as calming and encouraging male to behave better than without women on board. The, otherwise so macho, working environment became more professional. The female impact was thought to affect the working atmosphere in a good way stated 58% of the study group. Majority of the answers thought that gender does not affect the work rather than the personality of the individual. After all, 56% of the interviewees thought that women have positive impact, 39% thought that women on board do not have impact at all and five percent thought that females have a negative impact.

Male sailors had also witnessed harassment and discrimination and they had also been victims to the harassment. The harassment was told to be happened from male-to-male, from male-to-female and from female-to-male.

The only type of harassment that no one mentioned was from female-to-female, even though female sailors on board were thought to be *“not always but often lesbians”*.

Most of the women in the study group had faced harassment and discrimination. The harassment was conducted by the co-workers as well as from the harbour workers. The harassment was often interrupted by another colleague. Sometimes the harassment followed the women even after they left the vessel, by contacting or messaging them on their free time. Majority of the women interviewed did not answer to the optional part to explain more about the harassment.

Majority of the ones who had experienced harassment also said it happened “as a joke”. For example “*Some of the jokes are racist and sexist, even though this is not appropriate behaviour, it is part of the culture*” referring to the sailor culture. When the discrimination is disguised to be a joke or humour, it might be harder to notice or intervene when the harassment or discrimination is happening.

In the question “Have you noticed any harassment or discrimination?” 19% of the interviewee said maybe. When asked “Have you self-experienced harassment or discrimination?” eight percent answered maybe.

95% of the females who answered had been on board as the only woman, pointing out the gender distribution in the Finnish shipping industry. When asked whether the women feel that they work “the same as their male colleagues, less efficient or more efficient”, 75% thought that they work the same as the male colleagues. Every fourth women thought that they worked more efficient than the male colleagues. The reason why 25% stated that they were more efficient was due to that the women felt like “*they have to work twice as hard to get the same approval as men*” and due to these reasons they thought themselves to be more efficient. The acceptance on board had always been good said 55% of the females who answered. The rest thought that the acceptance had been good, but could be better.

When asked should there be more females on the Finnish shipping industry 85% said yes and the rest 15% said no. The ones who said yes thought that more equal gender distribution would benefit the industry whereas the people working in it. The ones, who answered no, thought that it does not have any difference whether there are females or not or that “*it’s a stupid industry anyway*”. Mainly the 15% answering no were not against the idea of women in the shipping industry but about the idea of why there should be more women if there is no interest for them to start working.

## **9.2 Critical examination**

In the beginning of this thesis, it was important to find a subject that was interesting enough to write several pages about. The subject studied is also personal, since I am a woman working at sea.

The background studying for this thesis was rather easy, since there was a lot of literature about women in working life. Harder was to try and find history of the Finnish women in the sea industry.

The questionnaire did succeed well. The amount of answers was good and so was the acceptance. As can be interpreted from the non-valid answers, this is a sensitive subject for some.

One week is fairly short time to reach out to everyone who could fit the target group. Also having the questionnaire in different languages, as in Finnish and Swedish, could help with getting more answers.

### **9.3 Further studies**

A follow-up study could be made since the subject arose more questions and is current in the social media. For example:

- How many women have you worked with?
- Why do women want to work on a male dominant field?
- The impact of male on a female dominant working environment?
- Why do men want to work on a female dominant working environment?

Currently in the Swedish shipping field there is going a campaign called Lätta Ankar. Lätta Ankar is a campaign in the social media where women in the Swedish sea industry have been sharing their experiences of sexual harassment and discrimination they have faced on board. The Facebook page made has more than 200 followers and the subject has been given publicity in Sweden whereas in Finland. After seeing some of the comments and videos, I find this subject very interesting. The stories told are not new, since there are similar ones in the Finnish sea industry also. Personally I think it is a good thing that these things come into publicity; working at sea should not differ from working at land based jobs. As one might spend months on board with quite small crews, it should be organized so that sailors (no matter the sex, cultural background, etc.) could feel themselves approved and safe among the crew and in the ship they are temporarily living and calling home.



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## Appendices 1 - Questionnaire

### The impact of females on a male dominant working environment

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This theses studies the impact of females on a male dominant working environment.

The aim is to study how the male sailors feel about having a female co-worker and how female sailors find it to work on a male dominant working environment.

The study focuses on cargo vessels, since they are more male dominant than passenger vessels. Also due to the fact that the vacancies women perform are considered to be more "manly jobs". On passenger vessels most of the women are working on the galley side or in the service department which are considered to be more feminine.

The study will be done anonymously and will only take a few minutes of your time.

Part of the questions are for men only and part of them are for women only.

Thank you for the answers!

#### Gender

☐ Male

☐ Female



## Age

\*

☐ 20-30☐ 30-40☐ 40-50☐ 50-60

...

## Nationality

\*

☐ Finnish☐ Other

## If other, what?

Lyhyt vastausteksti

## What kind of vessel are you currently working or you have worked on?

\*

☐ Cargo vessel☐ Passenger vessel☐ Other

## If other, what?

Lyhyt vastausteksti

...

## What is your position on board?

\*

Lyhyt vastausteksti

How long have you been working at sea? \*

- ☐ Under 5 years
- ☐ 5 to 10 years
- ☐ Over 10 years

How does a woman on board affect the working environment? \*

- ☐ Positively
- ☐ Negatively
- ☐ Does not affect at all

Have you noticed any discriminating comments or behavior on board? For example bullying or sexual harassment? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If you answered yes or maybe, choose the options that apply.

- ☐ Verbal discrimination, for example discriminating comments
- ☐ Verbal harassment, suggestions or sexual comments
- ☐ Physical harassment, grouping or touching

Did it happen from male to a female or from a female to male? Please explain your answer.

Pitkä vastausteksti

Have you self experienced discrimination or sexual harassment? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Maybe

If yes or maybe, choose the options that apply

- ☐ Discrimination
- ☐ Suggestive or sexual comments
- ☐ Grouping or touching

Please explain your answer.

Pitkä vastausteksti

Do the female sailors differ from the male sailors? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

...

If yes, how?

Pitkä vastausteksti

For men: Do you feel your female co-workers perform work differently than male ones?

- ☐ Yes, female workers are more effective
- ☐ No, they work the same
- ☐ Yes, female workers are less effective

Please explain your answer

Pitkä vastaukset

---

For men: Does a female co-worker affect the atmosphere or the work itself?

- ☐ Yes, in a good way
- ☐ No, does not affect
- ☐ Yes, in a bad way

Please explain your answer

Pitkä vastaukset

---

For women: Have you been on board so that you were the only woman?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

For women: Do you perform work differently than your male workers?

- ☐ Yes, I am more efficient than my male colleagues
- ☐ No, I work the same
- ☐ Yes, I am less efficient than my male colleagues

Please explain your answer

Pitkä vastaukset

For women: How do you feel going on a male dominant environment as a woman? Has the acceptance been good or have you felt unwelcome on board?

- ☐ The acceptance has been allways good
- ☐ I have felt unwelcome on board
- ☐ The acceptance has been good, but could be better

Please explain your answer

Pitkä vastaukset

Do you feel there should be more women in the shipping industry in Finland? \*

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Please explain your answer.

Pitkä vastaukset